

III. PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

A. Background

Efforts to develop a Recreation, Park, and Open Space Master Plan date back to 1993, when the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board developed a survey of City Council members, the Parks and Recreation staff, and its own members, in order to identify the top five master plan issues for each group. These efforts were merged into a citywide process initiated in 1994 to prepare a Comprehensive Plan, with Parks and Recreation comprising one section of a larger document.

The goals and objectives for Parks and Recreation (**Section 2.08 of the Comprehensive Plan**) and the Park and Open Space Plan (**Section IV of the Comprehensive Plan**) both reflect findings from the Comprehensive Plan process. They, along with the other sections of the plan, were developed through a series of interviews with members of the College Station City Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, as well as with selected homeowners, business representatives, church leaders, developers, and others with an interest in the future of College Station. Current and projected park land needs, developed as part of the Comprehensive Plan, are illustrated in this section on page 3 in **Map F - College Station Park Land Needs**. This map was revised as part of the 2002 Master Plan revision process.

Citizen opinions of parks and recreation (and other city) services are regularly solicited through annual telephone surveys. In general, College Station residents are satisfied with the quality of park and recreation services provided by the city and a majority have visited a city park within the past year (82.4% in 2001 and 78.4% in 2002). **Table 3, page III-4**, summarizes responses to the 2001 and 2002 citizen surveys as they relate to park and recreation services.

Other measures have been taken to assess the needs and desires of the city's residents with respect to recreation, parks, and open spaces. During the fall of 1997, an undergraduate research methods class in the University's Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences (RPTS) conducted a city-wide household survey to determine park usage patterns, resident satisfaction with and impressions of the city's parks, recreation, and open space facilities and services, and suggestions for improvements. From an effective sample size of 427 households, 304 completed the surveys for a response rate of 71%. **Appendix 7** contains the executive summary, conclusions, and recommendations from this survey. These findings, which included residents' strong desire for a trail system linking city parks and the importance residents place on beautification in city parks, were incorporated in the further development and refinement of the Parks and Recreation Department's goals, objectives, and needs identification and assessments.

Also in the fall of 1997, RPTS conducted a survey of College Station children in kindergarten through the fifth grade for the city's Independent School District and its Parks and Recreation Department. The focus of this study was to identify ways that the city could help to meet after-school program needs. On the basis of 1,077 returned questionnaires, the study recommended that participation in city-sponsored after-school programs by under-served segments of the community (particularly individuals from lower income households and the African-American and Hispanic

communities) should be encouraged, and that the city should seek ways to make the programs more accessible.

In addition to the above studies and surveys, public input was solicited and included in the development of master plans for Lick Creek Park, Wolf Pen Creek Corridor, Lincoln Center/Wayne Smith Corridor (renamed W. A. Tarrow Park in 1998), Veterans Park and Athletic Complex, a former landfill site, and a current landfill site. These six master plans are illustrated in **Appendix 8. Chart 2 on page III-5**, outlines the general procedure followed in the design reviews for these projects and, in fact, for all parks and special facilities, including neighborhood parks.

B. Master Plan Development

The city's Comprehensive Plan was approved by the City Council in 1997. However, the need for a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan separate from the Comprehensive Plan arose in discussions between city staff and the Parks and Recreation Board. The Board determined that the Comprehensive Plan, while providing useful, general guidance on the future of parks, recreation, and open space in College Station, was not specific enough to direct site, facility, and program development over the next ten years. Increasing demands on Parks and Recreation staff time and energies precluded an in-house preparation of the plan, and utilization of an outside resource person was deemed desirable in order to develop the plan, provide objectivity, and introduce a new perspective to the process.

The Master Plan was revised in 2002 through a cooperative effort between staff and a subcommittee of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board members are listed in **Appendix 9**.

Map F College Station Park Land Needs

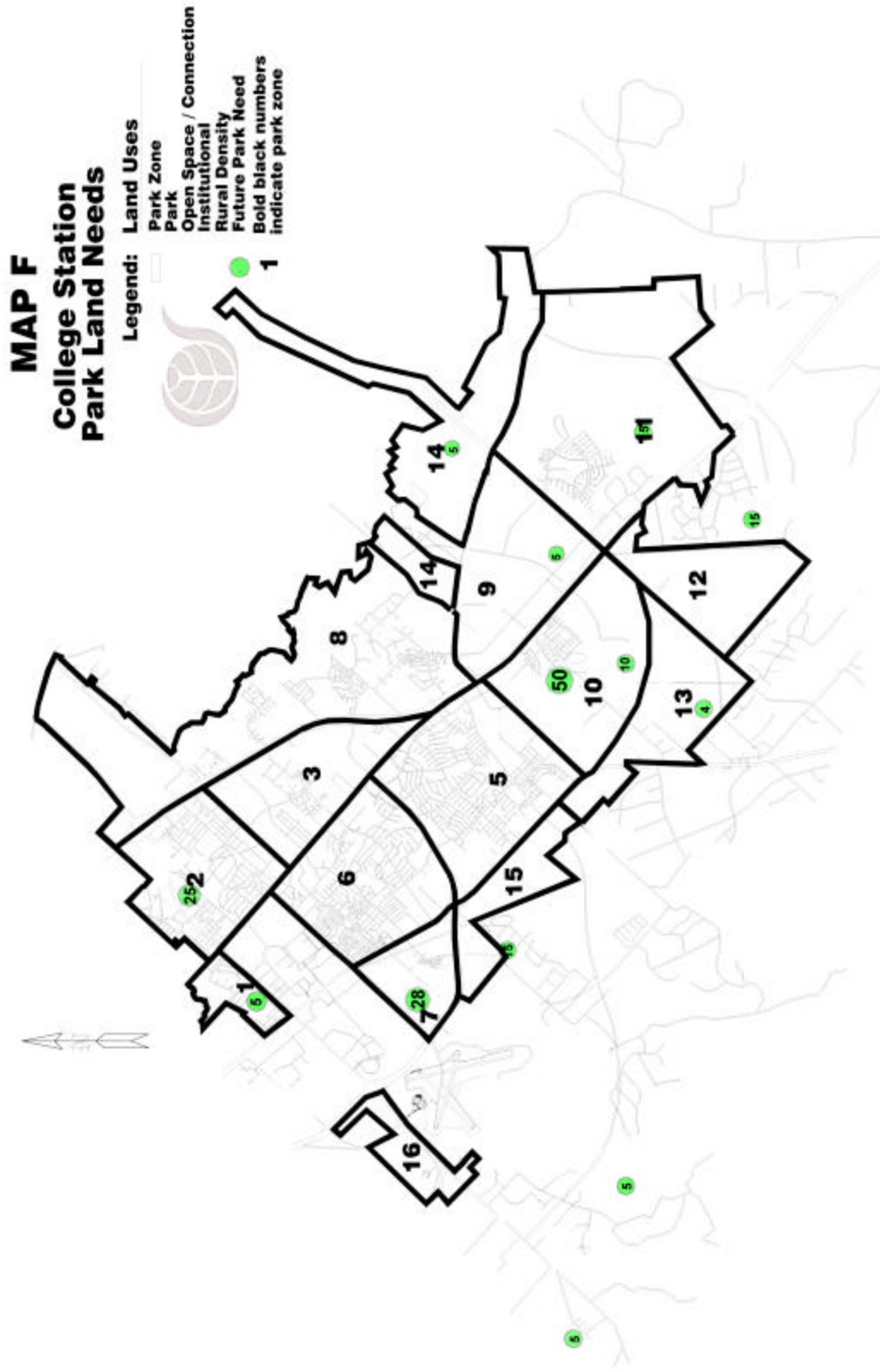


TABLE 3

CITIZEN SURVEYS 2001-2002

SERVICE PROVIDED	VERY SATISFIED	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED	SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED	DON'T KNOW OR REFUSED
Youth Leisure						
2001	48.8%	36.0%	5.3%	3.4%	0.6%	5.9%
2002	53.0%	34.0%	4.4%	1.4%	0.8%	6.4%
Adult Leisure ¹						
2001	54.6%		10.3%		7.3%	27.9%
2002	46.4%		17.2%		5.6%	30.8%
Cleanliness/ Maintenance of Parks						
2001	60.0%	31.3%	2.2%	5.5%	1.0%	0.0%
2002	62.4%	30.4%	3.6%	3.1%	0.5%	0.0%

¹In the Adult Leisure category, the "Very Satisfied" and "Somewhat Satisfied" response columns were combined, as were the "Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied" and "Somewhat Dissatisfied" response columns. Results from the City of College Station Annual Citizens Survey, June 2002, conducted by the University of North Texas Survey Research Center; 500 respondents.



639 youth, ages 5-12, participate in the annual city basketball leagues that utilize school facilities for games and practices. The program emphasizes participation and teamwork over competition.

CHART 2

GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR PROJECT DESIGN REVIEW

New park design follows a series of steps that encourage public input and extensive staff review. Public hearings are conducted by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. These hearings are promoted through newspaper advertisements, signs at park sites, and by direct mail to adjacent residents or interested groups. Meetings are held in the affected neighborhoods when possible.

Larger athletic parks, nature-based parks, or indoor facilities may involve public hearings, citizen committees, and Texas A&M University class design studies as part of this process. Neighborhood parks are designed in-house by the parks planning staff. The staff also conducts the competitive bid process and supervises construction. Large projects are normally, but not always, designed by outside professional firms. The deciding factor is the amount of engineering or architectural expertise needed for each specific project.

